

**JMHCP Taskforce -- Juvenile Subcommittee Meeting  
May 23, 2007**

- The subcommittee selected Danielle Lipow as facilitator. Danielle will report to the Executive Steering Committee on activities of the subcommittee.
- The subcommittee was asked to recommend any additions to the taskforce that would benefit the target population and several suggestions were made:
  - A rural and urban public school administrator – the group felt administrators may not understand that a child does not have to be committed to DYS to access services and many felt they school systems were quick to push SED youth out of mainstream school in favor of DYS
  - Representatives from the juvenile court in either Morgan County or Wilcox County – the group felt that a more rural juvenile court needed to be represented on the subcommittee, as the only juvenile court representatives currently on the TF are from Jefferson County and Mobile County
  - An adolescent treatment provider
  - A representative from Dr. Sue Adams' office at the state Dept. of Education – Dr. John Stewart, DYS School District Superintendent, felt they would come and serve and be interested in the outcomes of the project
  - A representative from the Assoc. of County Commissions – they have great local “reach”
  - A representative from the faith-based community – there was some discussion as to whether this person needed to be a clergy member or whether this person needed to represent a faith-based program that deals with the target population; Steve Lafreniere suggested approaching the Governor's Office of Faith-Based & Community Programs for a representative.
- The subcommittee identified several serious and longstanding issues that contribute to the problem of overrepresentation of juveniles with SED in the juvenile justice system:
  - No standardized screening instrument currently is in place and, even if there were such a tool, there is no staff to administer it at intake.
  - No communication or data sharing exists among the agencies that all have collective responsibility for the target population
  - All the agency representatives complained that agencies and their staff members are often unsure as to who has the ultimate responsibility for members of the target population and how to identify the responsible agency.
  - Communities often have limited capacity to deal with the target population prior to their initial contact with the juvenile justice system.
  - Poor identification of non juvenile justice resources for target population & their families
  - Limited access to services (pre-JJ system) in many areas
  - No incentives for counties to keep members of target population local.

- Acute need for education on availability of and access to services for target population (NOT DYS!!) for judges & county commissioners – group members stated that many judges think services can only be obtained by DYS commitment
- Need greater outreach to faith-based community
- Lack of informed advocacy by attorneys representing members of target population – this includes guardian ad litem AND defense attorneys
- Need for role clarification among service providers – who is responsible for serving who? How?
- State lawmakers need to be better informed as to how the policies and laws they have passed contribute to this problem